



C. L. Goodwin

"It would, indeed, be Easter Day for the world if bicycles could be banished from the streets, an Easter in which new hopes could soar above evil tendencies."—Charlotte Smith.

"Give the girl a wheel Easter Sunday, let her forsake the stifling town and go out to see the country which the good God has made for her."—Constance Merrifield.

"It would, indeed, be Easter Day for the world," says Charlotte Smith, the woman who is trying to have bicycles banished by act of the Massachusetts Legislature, "if bicycles could be taken from the streets and suburbs for twenty-four hours."

"An Easter in which new thoughts and new hopes would rise above the evil tendencies which have enslaved them for the past year."

"Banish the bicycles from the roads Easter Sunday. It breaks down the barrier and makes it easier to go wrong. Take away the bicycle for that one day, if for no other day in the year, and we shall have a great and glorious Easter, a bright and triumphant day when right can fight wrong without the tremendous popular bicycle working against it."

"The woman who rides a bicycle Easter Sunday is stepping, either knowingly or unknowingly, a long way in the wrong direction. The woman who sends her daughter out to ride the wheel Easter afternoon is wilfully paving the way for a future which neither she nor the girl will be able to face with an upright countenance. If that girl goes wrong within the twelve-month let the mother blame herself and the bicycle—not the girl."

I am sorry to hear that my friend Charlotte Smith wants the bicycle taken

off the streets Easter Sunday. She is a good woman and a sincere woman. I met her two weeks ago in the business office of a friend. She is a youngish middle-aged woman, who boasts of being fifty, but looks forty. When she talks she is almost pretty, and when you hear the sound of her voice you like her. She is sincere, or thinks she is—but she is all wrong about the bicycle!

I once saw a poor drunken creature "down on Poverty Row" lift her dress and sit down in a wild, weird drunken frenzy. I have often wondered since if logic would not say that women should never again have dresses or voices because that one poor bleared woman went wrong with both!

I suppose there can be wheels and wheels. Even Charlotte Smith says there can; but she never saw any of the exceptions. She admits that, when out looking for bicycle trouble she has followed "Rococo Corps" through already famous regions, and that she has visited the boulevards at midnight, when the wheels were not there and only the "wheels" were out.

"That makes a difference, you know. And Easter Sunday it will make all the difference in the world. If I had twenty-seven daughters, as many as the Goddess Naja, who died in grief because there were not twenty-seven ethereal kingdoms for them to govern,

I should go out and purchase twenty-seven '37 wheels. They should all have the new easily cared for bearings and the new high gears."

Their guards should be nickel plated and their saddles should match their tool bags, and the wheels be painted any color the girls liked.

Then I should order twenty-seven new bicycle costumes, to match the wheels, and Easter Sunday afternoon, after the church, the music, the good will and the flowers, I should turn out on moon with my girls. I should proudly suspect that I should die of pride when I saw them pedalling up the avenue. But I am positive that I should not die of grief over doctor bills nor ruin my purse with apothecaries' sundries.

People can remember when women "made up" for Easter Sunday. They rose an hour earlier in the morning to get on their war paint. Perhaps not the actual article, but something that looked very much like it. If it rained there was weeping, and in front of the church door stood a line of carriages, such as were never there other Sundays, though the Lord attended services just the same all the year around. The comic joke of that day was of the woman, too ill to go to church, who spent the morning with her head out of the window, her Easter hat pinned carefully in place;

and everybody has read the threadbare description of the Easter thoughts that were bitter for hats instead of glorious for the Lord.

The bicycle has taken that out of the hearts and lives of women. It is the grandest instrument for health of mind and body that has been given since the worlds began rolling around. Easters, the hard edge of the pew in front is giving thanks for happiness.

That means health, contentment—and good times to come. No stifled heart, no envy and no thoughts of the "at home" to in those Easters when they called to show their gowns, don't you know!

Now there may be women who are looking forward to this Easter afternoon as a time when they can be very elegant and elegant opportunity for going to the way of the transgressor, and which the bicycle will blaze for them, once they get upon the thoroughfare where there are bicycle trousers and masculine sweaters. There is no declaring that there are not such persons. But I consider there are not such persons. They tend that they always wanted to go the way of the transgressor, and without health in her body and without contentment in her mind, ready for whatever

Satan may put her up to.

If I had two girls to take care of and two paths open—one to church, laced up and dressed up, and to promenade afterwards, with 5 o'clock tea to follow, and a muscled in the evening; and the other a bicycle ride in the air, I should say mount the girl upon the wheel at 2 P. M. and let her ride to the country and to God, for she stands a good chance of this morning the heel bowed upon the hard edge of the pew in front is giving thanks for happiness.

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Mrs. Smith tells the story of women who come to her and tell her that they were thrown in harm's way from riding the bicycle to Bicycle Hell, where they learned to drink whiskey. Oh dear,

to drink whiskey will do so anyway, and if the bicycle happened to be the nearest agent at hand she blames the wheel.

She would have found whiskey at other places besides the wheelman's retreat.

Mrs. Smith also tells a story about yellow garters and the girls who show them on the bicycle. Now, that isn't wonderful at all. Go to the seashore and you will see yellow garters.

They don't hurt any one. They are only pretty. But the truth is, you don't show your garters upon a bicycle; and though you may stand upon the corner all day watching the wheels come from all directions you won't get one such glimpse as the ocean gives you every second of its splash during the bathing hours. That is truth, not fiction.

Doctors say that, since the wheels came in, they have had fewer cases of melancholia. The girl who used to cry if you looked across at her laughs as she steps into her bicycle seat, and tells you to cheer up. The woman who used to sulk because you forgot something is too busy now, planning your trip with her, to ask you if you forgot so and so, and that is what the bicycle does for the home. What it does in enjoyment and spirituality is something which each rider must answer personally.

There is another point to be scored for the wheel, an Easter point. And that is

the chance it gives everybody. It used to be a dreary old world for the grandmothers. They took care of the babies, overlooked the cook, went to market and darned stockings. Now they do up their gray curls into a neat Psyche, get out a pair of trim shoes, shorten a neat skirt, put on a bolero and start to do the suburbs. Gray hairs are as common upon a bicycle as on locks, and much more common than the awful peroxide which is used to offend the sight everywhere.

Mrs. Smith claims that the wheel is pernicious to the boy. Well, they say that "boys will be boys" anyway. But if I had twenty-seven boys, brothers to the twenty-seven girls before referred to, I should buy them '37 racing wheels and, putting my trust in the God that made them, would mount them, with faces pointed to the broadest, smoothest way, and hope for the best.

The boy with a bicycle is too busy finding a coasting spot and becoming "strong on hills" to plan incendiaries or lay pipe for State prison.

Take back these bicycle words, Charlotte. Leave the bad people alone. Come out and enjoy the sun of Easter and remember that the Lord's glorified face came up over the hills where the bicycle will carry all who love the spot where his face shone.

CONSTANCE MERRIFIELD.

CONSIDER THE GROWERS OF THE EASTER LILIES.

Although the Easter lily neither loses nor gains, it cannot be said that those who take care of them lead the same Mikadd existence. Of all the plants to raise, the Easter lily is the most difficult, and of all the flowers that bloom the Easter lily is the most elusive.

Its main point is that it shall bloom in the spring and give out fragrance from a centre of unalloyed whiteness, and to achieve this result the grower must follow the country both amateur and professional, tall from July, when the first cuttings are put out, until March, when the plant is set in the light sunlight for the finishing touches to its beauty.

In November the bud-work is begun, then comes a period of darkness, then one of light, then a brilliant opening, not far out of the way, in its stages of development, from the new spiritual life which must of us live, or try to live, from Easter to Easter.

Those people who have succeeded in growing the Easter lily growing have received credit for the same, whether they did it for the money or for the love and fame of it. In floriculture, workman and

millionaire stand side by side if both are growing the same lily in their hands. In the catalogue their names are intermixed without regard for the difference in their purses. In the flower show they walk up together to receive their prizes.

Easter Sunday the lily that blooms in the window of Millionaires' Row may have come from the conservatory of a wealthy and successful grower, but, like as not, it came from the little farm of Sides Bluffs, who grows an acre of lilies down in the Orange Mountains and has been forwarding this year in shipping the first and finest lilies to market. The lily bears no more a trace of its lowly birth in its Easter bloom than the Christ in the brilliancy of his Easter rising.

Therefore it is that two names of Easter-lily growers are mentioned side by side as bringing forth Easter lilies results as none others can. One is John Henry Peterson, of Long Island, who has a lily farm under half an acre of land, and the other is J. Pierpont Merriam, who owns a bigger field of lilies,

but gets no bigger nor more fragrant ones.

Both use the red sandy soil to be found in the Bermudas, where it is said the Easter lily came from. Both start their lilies in November planting them "mid-way," so that there will be roots for both top and bottom. After the plants have been two months in darkness they are brought out and set into the ground in their pots. They are placed in the glass house in long even rows, three times deep, between narrow paths. Water is given to "sprinkle" twice a day, in very early morning and late at night, until the April season approaches. Then comes the trying time. Here is a bud that must be kept back, for it begins to show white. Here is one that must be forced, for it is only a

half-hard green knob. A bunch of these growers are like in their treatment. One of the growers' houses is opened and into it is the same long even rows, the lily pots are placed, each being sunk in its hollow in the ground. The top is kept covered, except for an hour a day,

and so the "best" lily buds are raised until the day for opening comes. Meanwhile the backward ones are being forced by heating, sunlight and watering. By Easter all stand together, like a class, that has been coached until the backward ones stand even in the ranks with those who were more forward to natural development.

Mrs. Sarahanna Crewe is one of the best lily-growers of the country. She lives in Ohio, and supplies the street markets of Toledo and Cincinnati. She began it by being sick. She was a working woman and she could not afford to live without work. Her doctor told her to "consider the lilies," and he would try to sell them for her. When Mrs. Crewe had her Easter lily plants all fall of green knobs. Outside she was blowing a March breeze, but Mrs. Crewe resolutely sat and hoped for the best. Sure enough, according to the prediction, March week, but like a lamb and took with him the lily Easter lily plants to Cincinnati, where they sold for \$2. It wasn't much, but the work

had been cheap. Earth and water, sunlight and a home—all the Easter lily asks—were provided by the Lord, and Mrs. Crewe did the rest. Her time was "her own" that year and the lilies were a great deal worse than they ought to be. Since then she has gone into the business and supplies florists East and West, despising the limited confines of any one city.

Helen Gould, the next greatest woman lily-grower, started in a different way. Her father was dying of consumption. He sent to Bermuda and got lily cuttings that measured twelve inches across and were warranted to produce twenty-five lilies each. So well did they fulfil their contract at the country home provided for them on the Hudson that they were encouraged to go at it again for a second blooming. The bulbs are deprived of water for a few weeks, rolled over on their sides, and "rested," with the result that in June there was a second blooming of Easter lilies at Lynbrook. Now, Miss Gould has a famous lily glass hothouse, where the lilies grow around your feet, and you must push

them back, as you walk through the paths. But if they do but once touch the hem of your garment you will carry the trace for many a day, for from their crushed petals the flowers weep forth a crushed fragrance that lingers long around you.

Rich growers take a pride in their lilies. There is something so noble about them that, for the time, they make the vivid American beauty and the gaudy chrysanthemum for the immaculate flower which is the nearest likeness we can have to the Infinite Sweetness. But there is a secret side of the Easter lily. A very material side. It is one of the greatest of money-makers. It costs the American public millions annually for the lily they see in the streets nowadays. They pay it willingly, as they pay for gewgaws, and that is what the lily trade amounts to. Listen to a few more details of sortidness. There were in 1896 5,648 establishments devoted to the culture of flowers and, as raising the Easter lily, 16,720 men and 1,116 women worked on the lily

pendent on needs, cuttings, hothouses, heat and advertising, and for American public paid out \$1,347,000 for the flowers and plants. Chicago spent the most money on the flowers, Philadelphia and New York expended most on the plants. Boston imported the greatest number of bulbs and New Jersey sent out two-thirds of the lily production of the United States. It must be told that the Easter lily at best lasts only two weeks in bloom. Then the flowers fall. Like white slaves sold in the market place, the flowers are forced to look their best, only to droop when transplanted to another sphere. But the Easter lily fills a want. You will buy one this year. You will every body else. Perhaps, on the bargain counter, peddled from some small stand, a few lilies that, at best, have only twenty-four hours of life and sweetness left. But in that twenty-four hours of fragrance there is exactly the lily inspiration which you crave, and for which growers work and mortal sweat up from Easter to Easter.

AUGUSTA FREECOTE.